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AUTHOR	Schuurman, Guy
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ABSTRACT

Until 1972, library services in Salt Lake County consisted of a group of branch libraries with nearly identical collections for recreational reading. Because the needs of the community had become more complex, a new regional library was built to coordinate library operations and establish new services. Among the innovations in public library service at the new library are the intershelving of young adult and adult nonfiction, and the housing of nonprint media with print media. The library houses an auditorium with a stage and kitchen, music practice rooms, TV conference rooms with video tape capability, and a complete reproduction center. This center includes photocopy, laminating, dry-mounting, and other reproduction equipment unusual in a public library. Community information services and bibliographic services are provided. The new program was financed through savings from previous budgets, an increased library mill levy, and $250,000 in revenue sharing funds. Patron response has been highly enthusiastic, and plans for expansion are underway. (KC)

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WHITMORE LIBRARY: A NEW CONCEPT OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES

Guy Schuurman

With the hiring of a new director in 1972, county commissioners, library board members, and staff members agreed that a new direction for library services was needed in Salt Lake County. At that time patrons were served out of ten branches emphasizing recreational reading. Collection building was identical in each building. The approach was always the same; buy 10, 20, or 30 copies of a book title depending on expected popularity with little consideration given to the needs of the individual community served. New services were lacking. Information and reference services, the heart of a modern public library, were hardly developed and promoted in any of the branches. Inter-library loan services, borrowing needed materials from other libraries, were mostly discouraged. Also cooperation between public libraries and other types of libraries was neither deemed necessary nor desirable.

Present services consisted mostly of clerical routines performed by so-called "professional librarians."

A new program needed to be developed meeting the demands of patrons living in a modern society.

With the backing of county officials and library board members, the library director and his staff were given the responsibility for program development. Final recommendations in the form of a 5-year plan were accepted unanimously by the staff, board, and county commissioners. The following photographic copies explain the new concept:

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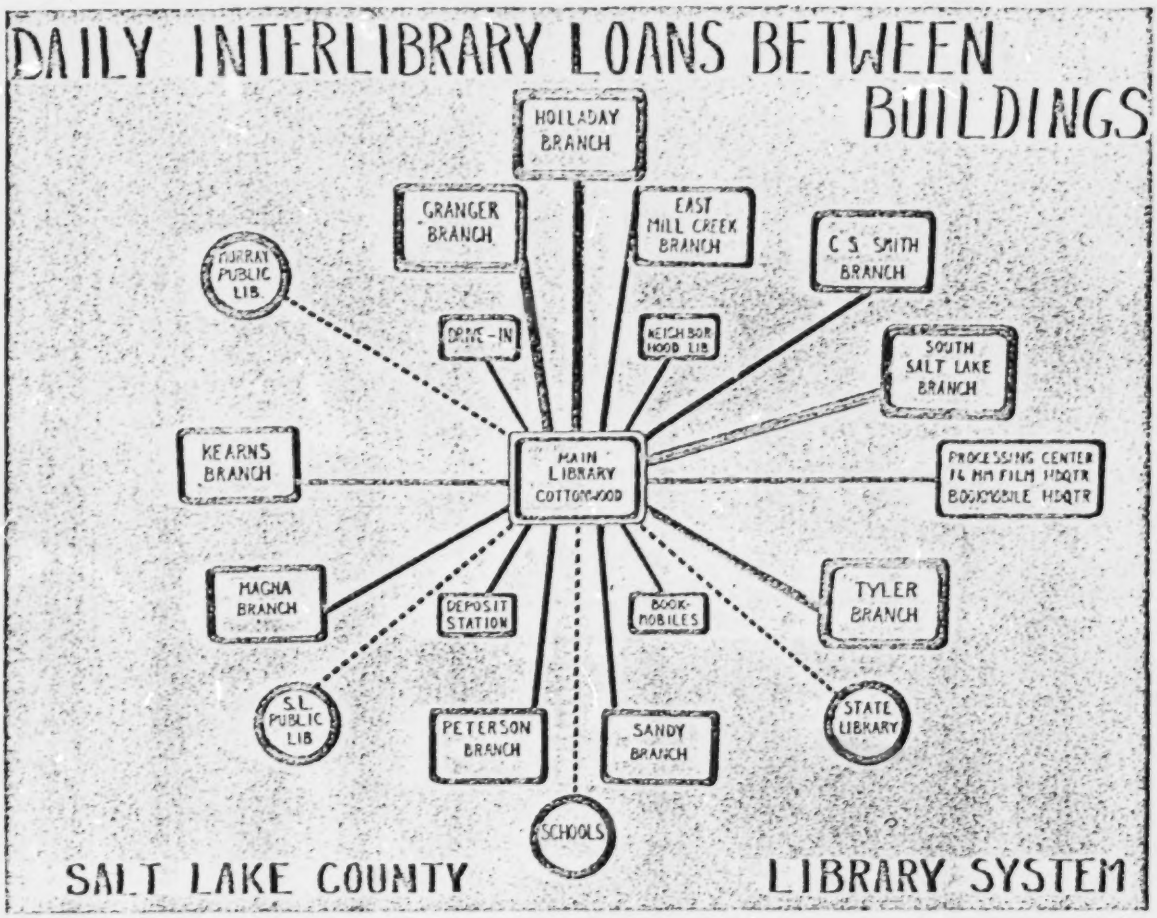
III. COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

As none of the branches in the Salt Lake County Library System are equipped to give specialized service, it is recommended that the new Whitmore Library act as a reference, resource, and bibliographic center for the entire system. It will not only be the main unit of the library system, housing a comprehensive collection of print and nonprint materials, but it will also serve the Cottonwood Heights area as a community library.



Daily delivery service from the Whitmore Library to all county branches, Salt Lake City Public Library, Murray Public Library, and the Utah State Library Commission will create a network of reference, interlibrary loan, and resource services that will meet nearly all of the needs of library patrons living in the service area. 16 mm sound films housed at headquarters (Midvale) will continue to be shipped on a daily basis to all branches and libraries in the Salt Lake valley.

Organization of the Whitmore Library will be different in many aspects from the traditional branch library in the system.

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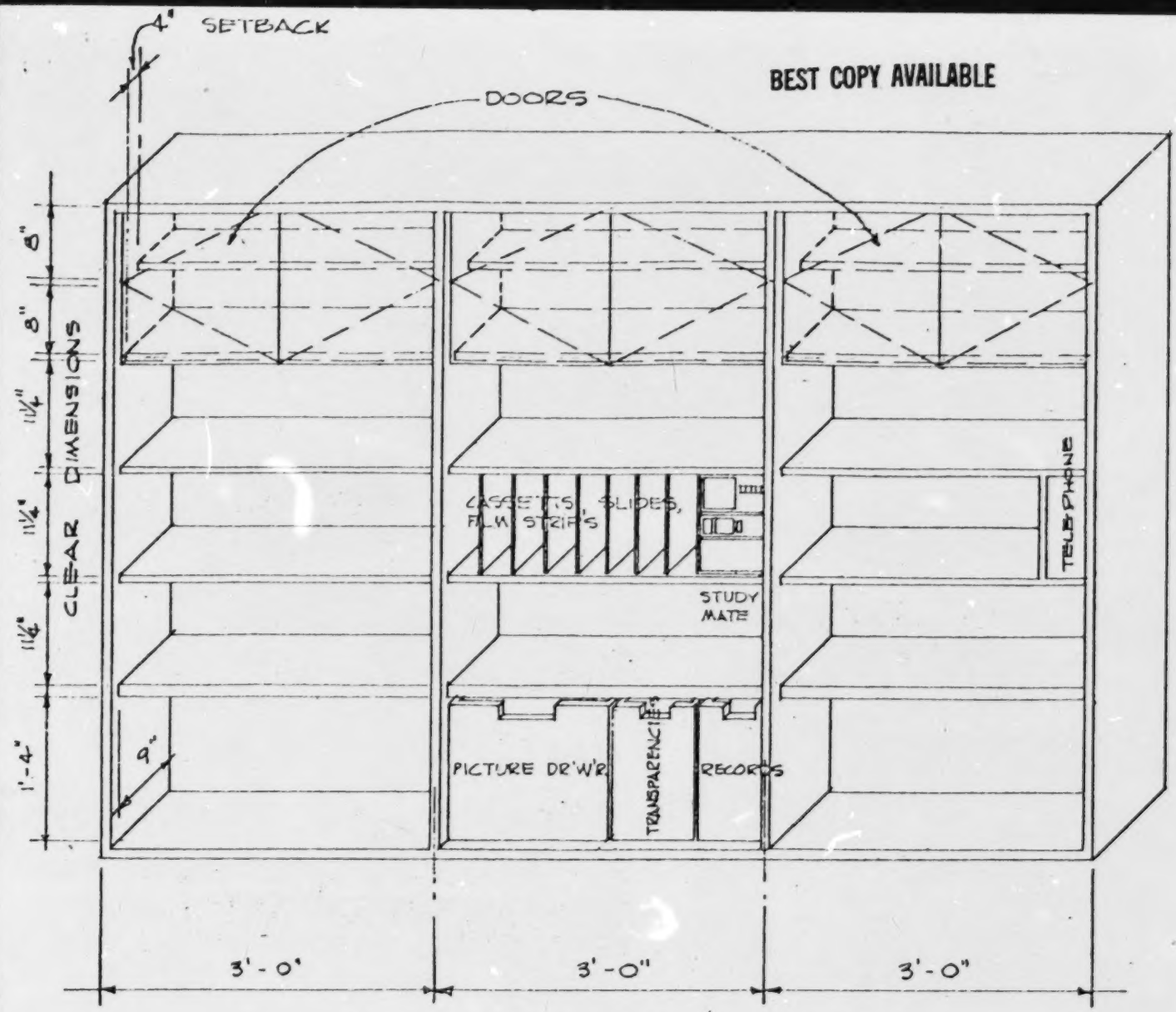

Section of Shelving Housing All Media

It is recommended that all non-fiction (juvenile, young adult and adult) be shelved together in one section. Patrons seem to enjoy having all books together on the same subject no matter what the reading level may be. It is also recommended that all non-print materials be housed and intershelved with the print materials. This arrangement again will give patrons access to all resources on a given subject in the same general area. The main floor also should contain children and young adult areas housing picture books, fiction, and other popular materials; a production center containing typing, copying, (opaque and overhead projection, photostatic), dry-mounting and laminating facilities; organ and piano rooms for trying out sheet music or for general practice; television rooms for closed circuit, cable, educational T.V. and video cassettes; conference rooms for discussion groups or concentrated study; and other specialized sections such as a business section, art and music section, etc. The lower level should provide a computer room for future computer control of information retrieval, book buying, circulation, production of book catalogs and bibliographies, etc.; an auditorium and classroom for special library programs; and a variety of staff areas for general and specialized functions. (See floor plans on pages 5 & 6)

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Some of the new services developed at Whitmore need further explanation:

INFORMATION AND REFERENCE CENTER: Heart of Whitmore and the system, combines comprehensive reference, a referral service complete with listings of community organizations, assistance with individual learning programs, and reader's guidance. Includes a telecopier, with links world-wide, and on-line stock market reports.

INTERLIBRARY LOAN: Based at Whitmore, this service locates hard-to-find books on patron request. Interlibrary loan materials are delivered by daily delivery to the branch most convenient for the patron.

PERIODICALS: Extensive collection of magazines and newspapers on microfilm and in print. Highlight is the complete New York Times from 1851 on microfilm, with printed index.

CHILDREN'S AREA: Brightly colored mini-chairs and matching game rug set the scene for story hours and displays, books, magazines and viewmasters.

DRIVE-IN BOOK DROP: In a rush? And your books are due? Never fret, just drive up and drop off.

ROOMS FOR RESERVATION: Facilities of all sizes are available for reservation, from the intimate conference rooms to the fully equipped classroom to the dignified board room to the ultra-modern auditorium.

TELEVISION CONFERENCE ROOMS: Not only can these sets receive regular network broadcasting, they can also air videotaped programs. Just dial your request over the phone and enjoy the show.

PRODUCTION CENTER: Make anything--dittos, copies--one or 100, transparencies, mounted pictures, slides, filmstrips and edited super 8mm films. Use the drafting table, the tracing table, the collator, one of the many different typewriters, or the overhead and opaque projectors.

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MAIL-A-BOOK: Provides library service to the elderly, shut-ins, the handicapped and others who cannot easily visit libraries. Catalogs with over 800 titles are available with request postcards attached. One of the first such services to offer large print books.

YOUNG ADULTS' AREA: Especially designed for the junior high and high school student. Includes a wide variety of popular paperbacks, catalogs on microfilm from major colleges and career materials.

MUSIC PRACTICE ROOMS: Equipped with a piano, an organ and the best in recording equipment, these rooms provide top-notch practice facilities for musicians from amateur to accomplished.

STUDY CARRELS: Studying becomes a treat in special carrels; some with typewriters, some with television sets capable of receiving video-taped programs, some with record players, some with tape decks and some with filmstrip viewers.

AUDITORIUM: Quadraphonic sound, a projection booth, dressing rooms, a kitchen, a grand piano and a stage with screens combine to form the ultimate in audio-visual experiences.

A multi-screen presentation was prepared to explain new library services to the public.

County Commissioners, and in particular Commissioner Ralph Y. McClure, were very responsive to the proposal to improve library services to the people of Salt Lake County. The library mill levy was raised for construction and additional operating expenditures. Other county departments -- auditor, treasurer, personnel, purchasing, etc., all helped and cooperated to build the newest and most modern county library headquarters building.

Community involvement also played a major role. The director and board met several times with the Cottonwood Heights Community Council. Their

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enthusiastic support and interest helped to finalize plans for construction. It was from this group of community-minded citizens that a nucleus of a "Friends of the Library" was formed. They continue to act as a laison between the library and the area residents.

All through the planning stages the expertise of the Utah Library Commission was called upon. Mr. Russell Davis, Director, acted as consultant, confidant and counselor, bringing his experience as the State Librarian to back up the direction of the director.

From the very outset when the plans were only in the talking stage, the press was apprised of all decisions made as representatives attended monthly library board meetings. As the time approached for the grand opening, more and more all the media were incorporated into the total public relations and publicity campaign. Paid advertisements were published in the Salt Lake Tribune, Sunday edition; The Murray-Eagle News Advertiser; and the Jordan Valley Sentinel. News releases, radio spot announcements, personal interviews on all three commercial television stations, and taped radio interviews rounded out the coverage that the press gave the grand opening. The Associated Press did an in-depth article on all the services available at Whitmore and from the clippings received, the story was even carried on the international scene. The local weekly newspapers and The Salt Lake Tribune and The Deseret News (dailies) contributed much in keeping the general public informed on their new library system.

The building was completely paid for when it was dedicated. This had been accomplished with the following combination of financial sources:

1. Savings from annual budgets.
2. Raise in library mill levy
3. $250,000 in revenue sharing funds.

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The land had been donated to the library board by Mr. Rich Whitmore, hence the name, "Whitmore Library".

The library laws in the State of Utah are very clear and specific encompassing all legal requirements for construction of buildings and financing thereof. The county attorney's office, however, cooperated on several occasions interpreting and clarifying the compatibility of library laws with other state statutes.

The success and accomplishments of the new program have been more than overwhelming. During the first six weeks 50,000 people came to the new library. Their enthusiasm and amazement knew no end. Many thousands said, "I can't believe it" and "What a fantastic library". People seemed to rejoice with all the new services and materials available in a larger, central building. What a tremendous sight it was to see the joy and enthusiasm in the eyes of children, and to realize how many thousands of adults were drawn to the library for needed services. Many seemed so anxious to improve the quality of their lives and to broaden their horizons through new learning opportunities.

The shelves seemed empty (the first two weeks 27,000 items out of 40,000 were checked out) but people continued to come again and again to make use of what they call "the greatest thing that ever happened in our community."

Interlibrary loan has grown by leaps and bounds. Nearly 1,000 requests are now being processed monthly for patrons residing in the entire valley. Daily delivery service from Whitmore to all branches and other libraries has done much to unify the system by giving equal access to print and non-print materials.

The future looks very bright. There is already talk of expansion. With so many people responding during busy hours, it seems the building is too small

already, and enough staff is not available to help people with informational, reference, and learning needs. But with the same cooperation, these problems can be overcome. People now realize what they have missed for so many years and understand much more fully the importance and value of good public library service. No doubt county officials, board members, and staff will continue to meet the needs of young and old alike living in a modern, complex society.

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